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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: TITUANA IDENTIFIES WITH PRAGMATIC FACTION OF
PACHAKUTIK

Classified By: DSCG 05-1, D

¶1. (U) Summary: The Ambassador's recent visit to the indigenous-majority city of Cotacachi highlighted USG interest in municipal best practices in Ecuador, and opened a dialogue with a key national indigenous leader, Cotacachi mayor Auki Tituana. A counterweight within the main national indigenous organization to the CONAIE leadership's increasingly leftist and globaphobic insulation, Tituana sought the meeting to share his municipality's successes while signaling pragmatic openness to collaboration with diverse forces to promote his people's development. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On August 29, the Ambassador visited Cotacachi, a heavily indigenous and highly successful city in highlands Imbabura province, to meet with indigenous mayor Auki Tituana, at his request. While there, she met with the Mayor and two representatives of the municipal council, toured the cultural center and USAID-financed market modernization project, and visited a Peace Corps youth center. During the tour of the market, the Ambassador and Mayor frequently drew applause from respectful citizens and vendors. Press coverage of the visit highlighted the significant USG-funded development projects in the area. Coverage also focused on the Ambassador's comments in response to questions on national issues, including congratulations to the GOE on a major money laundering bust, prospects for a possible resumption of free trade negotiations and renewal of the Manta accord.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador's meeting with Tituana was cordial, and, although he touched on other subjects, was billed mainly as a "presentation" to the Ambassador on the Cotacachi form of participatory municipal government. Despite ubiquitous portraits of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, Tituana warmly received the Ambassador. He later accompanied the Ambassador on the market tour and the press availability.

¶4. (SBU) During the hour-long meeting, Tituana clearly sought to set the Ambassador at ease, evincing pragmatism. He did not criticize the USG and, at one point, told us privately that the major problem with an FTA in Ecuador was simply a lack of information. He explained Cotacachi's participatory form of local government, which includes citizen commissions and transparent budgeting processes in all development projects. He focused on women in government, at one point proudly pointing out that women make up almost half of the municipal council. In response to the Ambassador's inquiry on his political aspirations, he claimed that presidential contenders Alvaro Noboa and Rafael Correa

courted him as their vice presidential candidate. In Correa's case, Tituana told us he had ruled out an alliance for fear of Correa's polemic and divisive style. (Note: Tituana had seriously and publicly contemplated challenging CONAIE national president Luis Macas for the Pachakutik presidential nomination.) Tituana also signaled rare political openness, citing his personal friendship with PSC Mayor of Guayaquil, Jaime Nebot. He was positive about PSC presidential candidate Cynthia Viteri, pointing out that a strong female presidential candidate is good for Ecuador.

15. (C) Comment: Tituana is a rare element in Ecuador's political mix--a legitimate indigenous leader with national stature who projects pragmatism and competence. The Ambassador's visit sought to underscore a message of our own openness and interest in helping all Ecuadorians of goodwill to help themselves.

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